

The city of dreams and golden boys. by peachykeensunandmoon

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Everyone Lives/Nobody Dies, Billy is a pianist, Enemies to Friends to Lovers, F/F, M/M, Meet-Cute, Steve is a struggling actor, do I need to say more

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Neil Hargrove, Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington, Steve Harrington's Parents, The Party (Stranger Things)

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington, Robin Buckley/Heather Holloway

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Summary:

Hello my lovely people,

I saw a post on tumblr by @memes-saved-me and felt compelled to write this. (@greyspilot made the suggestion for a lalaland au though :)

Hope you like this <3

goodnight/day

1. road rage and the city of stars.

Author's Note:

- For [greyspilot](#).

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Steve is frantically trying to get a job in the acting business, but he only moved here a month ago and the money left from his parents isn't much. He is agitated about it because he's in desperate need of cash, his job as a barista doesn't pay as well as he'd like it to. He shares his flat with 3 other roommates and has to work his ass off to live here all the same. The ironing board broke today, now his shirt is crumpled with no way to get the wrinkles out. He genuinely needed the shirt for his audition, it's his lucky dress shirt (but don't tell anyone.)

On his drive to work some asshole honked at him and even had the audacity to look pissed when he passed him. Just because Steve took his time while starting his car in traffic, it is fucking 1986 Los Angeles and Steve really doesn't know his way around the city yet, besides the traffic was moving at a snails pace, thank you very much! So he flipped the douchebag off and scowled to himself all the way to the coffeeshop, where he works to pay the bills.

Today has been shitty enough for him, at work he'd been scrubbing tables and making coffee all day. Then he saw a famous actor who's been in real Hollywood movies, blockbusters and all that, what a dream he thought. His boss told him that the guys drink is on the house. Steve had never felt more jealous. At just about three pm he hurried off leaving the next barista with like 10 coffee orders to fend for herself. He couldn't bring himself to feel bad because he needed to

get to the audition right away fearing he wouldn't make it in time. He had rushed out the door quickly and promptly bumped into a man who spilled his iced coffee all over his white dress shirt. Throughout the entire ride to the audition his anxiety had been eating away at him. He felt like crying before he even arrived at the location. The scene he'd had to prepare for today had been a crying scene and he didn't think he needed to act anymore for that to happen, he'd thought that maybe luck would finally be on his side.

It wasn't...

As if it couldn't get any worse he was interrupted by a woman right in the middle of the scene, it ruined his resolve and one of the casting directors told him that they've had seen enough. They cut him off way too early to be anything but a rejection. As he walked out and passed through the corridor he could see at least a dozen of guys, who all had brown hair and brown eyes, just like him.

When he finally arrives back home in his cramped flat he falls face first on his bed, with the intention of never getting out again. By now it's 8 pm and his head throbs from the migraine he's not tended to the entire day, he groans out defeatedly. The lights feel too bright, almost painfully so. He also can't stop thinking about that god awful audition.

It's difficult not to feel useless, when most people in your career field are in the end just washed up people with dreams that'll never come true. He often thinks about how it feels nearly impossible to feel special, when there's virtually every version of you in LA, who could be better for the same roles you're applying for.

Maybe a shower will help, he thinks to himself.

The steam that's fogging up the bathroom feels good on his skin. Contentment spreads throughout his tense muscles, it feels so good he finally starts to loosen up a bit.

Most of the time he feels fine but, when he isn't distracted, his mind starts back up again with the endless bounds of self doubt and the deprecating words from his parents for whom he's never been and never will be enough.

You'll never make it as an actor, let alone anything else.

That struck him deep. He thought at least in acting he might have a chance, the hurtful words though, they hold him back because he feels too insecure to really go all in, in preparation of failure. If he really gave his all and failed that would only prove his parents right.

Back in high school he'd been 'king' until one day he decided that being the King of the school just wasn't what mattered. He realised that there are better things... more important things in life than popularity and a girlfriend. That's when he started hanging out with Robin, she's one of his roommates, they met when Steve tried out for Drama Club. In the beginning they had teased each other and made fun of the other for embarrassing stuff, but overtime they gained each others trust. Now he cares for her like she's his sister and he hopes she does the same. When they worked in their small town at a family video store, they grew even closer, they decided to leave Hawkins for the City of Angeles. Both were fed up with their home life, Robins parents were as tolerant as you'd expect small town people in the 1980's to be, so not very welcoming. Then there were Steve's parents who only visited the house they call home, leaving their only son alone with the maids that only came around once a month or so.

Steve got so lost in his memories that he zoned out while looking at his reflection in the mirror. So it's only natural that he jumps when Robin barges in.

"What are you looking at so sulky ? Is the mirror about to tell us who the prettiest in the room is ? Oh, let it be me, let it be me!"

Theatrically she throws her head back and touches the back of her hand to her forehead pretending to faint.

"you doofus, I just wanna go to bed cause today fucking sucked."

"I take it the audition didn't go too well ?" She carefully checks in

case Steve wants to talk about it.

“No it was a disaster but lets talk about something else please?” He shakes his head distraught and ruffles his hair frustratedly.

She claps her hands together seemingly very sure of something she’s decided on her own without involving him in any planning.

“Alright then, WE are going to make you forget all about it, we’re gonna go to a club! Then we’ll get shitfaced and make out with hot people”

“Robin I just told you I was tired you can just go on without me its fine really, I was going to have early night and start tomorrow fresh, please don’t make me?”

He tries pathetically but inside he already knows he’s gonna give in, he always does, just can’t seem to tell her no.

“I will make you, because what good will it do if you’re sulking all night all by yourself, c’mon were in the city of stars, what if we meet a casting director or another actor? At these parties you never know if you might get lucky!”

“alright fine but if I don’t feel like it I’ll go home, Deal?”

“Deal.”

2. family friendly restaurants

Summary for the Chapter:

Billy has a new job, Max visits and other encounters happen.

Notes for the Chapter:

Hi,

thank you to anyone who reads my story.

Hope you stay safe and healthy and have a good night/day. :) <3

Fucking go! Billy thinks to himself as he watches the driver of the plum coloured BMW, which just won't move. It's not like he needs to be anywhere specific but slow drivers just irk him the wrong way.

Still steaming from his encounter, he gets himself a drink in a parking lot of a desolate drive through. While sitting on the uncomfortable plastic chairs, he wonders how he could make it as an artist after getting so stupidly ripped off by that manager. He'd really thought the guy was legit when he offered him that job. Tough luck amigo shit just won't work out for you ever, the nagging voice in his head tells him.

Half an hour has passed when he arrives home. He startles when he walks into the apartment and spots his redhead nightmare of a sister in the living room. She's lounging on the antique piano chair he had just bought because it belonged to a famous musician. His hands are itching to shoo her off of it immediately, but he restrains himself.

“Max I told you to stop sneaking in here, this is my home for gods sake!”

“Well I would hardly consider this dump, anything even remotely close to a home you haven't even unpacked yet.” She munches on chips and lazily slumps in the chair.

Carefully he shoos her out of the chair and tucks it somewhere she won't be able to reach it”

“Can you please not sit on it?”

“Why it's a chair do you want it to just stand around like an artefact, why would I not sit on a chair if it's just standing in the dining room?”

“It belonged to someone important so just ... please just sit over there”

“Alright but you really need to start unpacking you've been here for months already and not a thing has moved in except for your beloved piano. It's weird ...so just at least put some things away.”

Her gaze wanders over the many pictures of old jazz legends and the multiple instruments still packed in the corner into untidy boxes with pages over pages of music. He should feel embarrassed but the only thing that matters to him is his music and as long as that isn't working out he has to work hard and struggle to make his dream come true, whatever it takes.

“I will, ...when I have my own club to put them in”

“Billy, it's jus-...you need to get realistic and stop romanticising everything.”

“I'm working hard to achieve something Max, I'm not romanticising anything!”

He sighs very exaggerated with the biggest eye roll he can muster.

“... whatever you say... but I want you to meet someone, I think you'd like-“

“What?! no no no I don't want to meet anyone, I don't need to meet anyone, I'm fine with the way things are. Besides I'm way to busy with the music stuff” He hopes the panic in his voice is not audible.

“I think you'd like her, I really do.”

He immensely doubts that seeing as he is extremely gay, but she doesn't know that, if its up to him it'll stay that way, he thinks.

“well what are we even going to talk about? Does she like jazz ?” He feels ridiculous saying that because it makes him seem like a petulant child not getting his way.

“Probably not, but it doesn't matter, just look at the way you're living you really need to get out more. And you need to pay your bills!” She says that while eyeing his stack of unopened mail from his landlady.

“Thats none of your business, I'm fucking fine”

“Well if you wanna suffer then that's your problem Billy. And by the way, there is nothing romantic about living like a hermit and failing to keep a steady job!”

“I'm letting life hit me till it gets tired, then I'm gonna hit back, its a classic boxing move.”

They've been arguing on the way to his front door, as she opens it and walks out she tells him to unpack his boxes from the move.

...

That same night Billy finally gets to work at his new job, playing the piano at a fancy restaurant in the city. It's not ideal but at least he gets to play piano and people actually listen.

The manager of the restaurant tells him to play cheery Christmas music because the atmosphere is supposed to be family friendly. He loathes playing the same four songs over and over again.

So when nobody is paying attention to the background music, he thinks he can get away with varying a little and playing his own melodies for a change. He really thought he could get away with it, which is sadly not the case.

As he plays he gets lost in the music, putting all his dedication and emotion into his play. The keys underneath his fingers move swiftly along with every note. The dimly lit restaurant feels weirdly intimate with these families listening in on his music.

Right as he finishes his favourite piece the manager approaches the piano pedestal. He clears his throat irritated and looks condescendingly at Billy.

“What the hell is this ?”

“Its just music its not like anyone cared what kind?” The blonde defends calmly.

“I said Christmas music, what are you doing?!”

“I just changed it up a little, wheres the harm in that?”

“I specifically said Christmas music. You’re out of the job, get out”

Billy feels humiliated because he technically hasn't done anything wrong. Indignant he gets up and tries to argue his way out of getting fired.

“C’mon this is only the first strike, you can’t throw me out already?”

He feels like he could scream. This cannot be happening, he only just got this job.

“I can and I will, you have to follow the orders of the restaurant”

“Why don’t I just continue with the usual program and you don’t have to kick me out so soon, does that sound like a deal to you?”

“No I specifically told you to play Christmas music, you didn’t listen so get out of my restaurant, now!”

Angry and saddened by the lack of appreciation for his music he storms off into to the exit, where he shoulders the guy from the highway this morning and bolts out of the restaurant.

...

The same evening a few hours prior

Turns out he won’t be getting hammered because he’s the designated

driver and he takes that responsibility very seriously after seeing what happens when you don't.

Over the course of the night they've been to at least five different clubs tonight. At one of them a very drunk girl had tried to flirt with him but the only thing that was, was fucking uncomfortable for all parties involved. So he fled to get some drinks to get away for a bit and. When the night comes to an end, Steve just wants to drive home to his comfy bed. He exits the club and his car is just... gone. Just his fucking luck he thinks to himself and starts down the road to head home.

While walking home he can hear the soft melodic sounds of a piano from inside a restaurant. He's entranced and needs to find out who is playing so beautifully that he slips through the door. After some looking around his eyes land on the pianist, at closer look he notices that it is none other than road-douche from this morning.

He scoffs amusedly and keeps on standing there to listen to the music. Glad that the blonde hasn't noticed him he enjoys the show for a little bit. The guy is so lost in the music that it seems like he's the only one in the entire restaurant, Steve cannot look away.

Then an old man, seemingly the manager, storms out of the office strutting directly in the direction of the piano and with that the blonde man.

In a lowered but clearly agitated voice the manager scolds him:

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“No I specifically told you to play Christmas music, you didn't listen so get out of my restaurant, now!”

Without any time to prepare himself Steve intends to compliment the blonde for his play.

“That was bea-“

But he is rudely shoved away with a shoulder as the guy storms past him and out of the restaurant.